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ABSTRACT

For use by junior and senior high school English teachers and students in search of appropriate subjects for written compositions, this publication contains 1,237 topics compiled from a questionnaire sent to about 250 teachers. The topics are divided into categories: personal reminiscences, personal reactions, the familiar essay, description, processes, argumentative exposition, comparison and contrast, persuasive exposition, character sketch (types and individuals), fantasy, sports, the news, science, the arts and entertainment, farming, religion, philosophy, the school, and literary topics including "creative" writing paralleling literary works. Also suggested are eight techniques from which composition topics can be generated, the best topics being usually "those which have grown out of the classroom discussions." (DD)

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A Thousand Topics for Composition: Revised

Since the supply of *A Thousand Topics for Composition: Revised* is nearly depleted because of the popularity of the list (thousands of copies have been sold throughout the country since the original publication in 1951), a revision was recommended; and so a questionnaire was sent to about 250 junior and senior high school English teachers, requesting topics they have found effective in their units on composition.

After reviewing the topics accumulated in an excellent response from the teachers, it was decided not to limit the new list to one thousand topics but to present all topics suggested. An attempt was made, however, to sort out topics to avoid repetition wherever possible. Nevertheless, topics may be repeated in different areas. If there are repetitions, they are unintentional. Some of the original topics have been deleted where they have become dated.

In the original publication of *A Thousand Topics for Composition,* Marjorie E. Fox, the compiler, stated:

> Because having something to say is the first requirement for good writing, the most constructive method of teaching composition is through an approach to subject matter. If a student has something to say he will be interested in saying it well so that he may transmit his ideas accurately and clearly to the reader. If he understands that the purpose of his writing is to convey experience and thought rather than to demonstrate sentence construction and the proper use of punctuation, his writing will have added interest and meaning. It is the teacher's first job to convince the student that he has something worth saying.

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Since the teacher's role is very important in preparing the student for the composition assignment, here are a few techniques that some teachers have found worthwhile in giving the student "something to say" so that he may be interested in writing a good composition.

Suggested Techniques

1. Ask students to bring in pictures of people from magazines or newspapers. Write a descriptive theme developing physical details, moods, and environmental blending elements.
2. Use a quotation, such as, "Great is the battle god, great, and his kingdom a field where a thousand corpses lie" (*War's Kind* by Crane). Students write their idea of the meaning, arouse strong feelings, persuade.
3. To get characterization in a theme, use some of Edgar Lee Master's poetic characterizations from *Spoon River Anthology.*
4. Use records, such as "Venus" (modern rock records or classical), to inspire students to write a mood or feeling received from same.
5. Use the five senses — feel something and write your reaction, or smell incense and develop an essay from your reaction.
6. Work with answers to literature questions to inspire writing. Much writing is stimulated through literature.
7. Use a newspaper subject, such as a notable person and write a "thumbnail" sketch of an actual event in the person's life.
8. Class discussion of Patriotism, Justice, Home, Truth, stopped at a proper moment might suggest some personal opinions to be written.

These few techniques are presented only as suggestions, not as the only techniques. These techniques may give a teacher an idea for some original presentation.

Miss Fox's statement which was repeated in *A Thousand Topics for Composition* should be quoted again:

> The groupings are somewhat arbitrary. The topics are listed according to subject matter, though the subjects for exposition have been broken up in some cases to indicate methods of treatment. It is hoped that this will be an added convenience for the teacher who assigns a theme with a particular method of development in mind. The lists do not include all kinds of treatment, and topics from one list could, if the writer chose, be developed to fit another pattern.

Two new areas have been added to this revision: "Philosophy" and "Literary Topics." The latter has been subdivided into "In-

dividual Critical Analysis," "Comparison and Contrast," and "'Creative' Writing Paralleling Literary Works." Many of the suggested topics from the teachers indicate a growing interest in developing topics from the literature assignments in the classroom.

The teacher is encouraged to use these lists as a stockpile of ideas from which to formulate his own topics. Ideally, the best topics are usually those which have grown out of the classroom discussions.

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES

1. My first fight.
2. My first encounter with the law.
3. My first encounter with racial discrimination.
4. My first job.
5. My first spanking. (On being punished for the first time.)
6. My first dollar.
7. My first ten years were the hardest.
8. My most important decision and why I made it.
9. My most embarrassing moment.
10. The most stupid thing I ever did.
11. My most serious accident.
12. My narrowest escape.
13. The longest minute I ever spent.
14. The wisest thing I ever did.
15. Prize memory of the year. (Regrets of the year.)
16. A Christmas thrill. (Christmas this year.)
17. Thoughts on New Year's Eve.
18. An unforgettable experience.
19. The fun of being sick.
20. Moving into a strange town.
21. Learning to like vegetables (or other foods).
22. One of life's comedies (or tragedies) in which I played a star part.
23. Things I have lost.
24. A mistake I vow never to repeat. (I'll never do that again.)
25. The dog (or other pet) in my life.
26. I sold papers. (A job I have held.) (My summer job.)
27. Musical memories. (Songs my mother taught me.)
28. Memories of home.
29. What I learned from Dad.
30. A tradition (or custom) in our family (neighborhood, section, state, or country).
31. How my family celebrates Easter (or some other holiday).
32. The origin of my family name.
33. My ancestors. (Page from my family history.)
34. Meet the family.
35. What I have inherited.
36. The "400" in my home town.
37. An inexpensive good time.
38. An experiment I once tried.
39. My big moment.
40. Happy ending.
41. I expected too much.
42. I was in a hurry, and . . . .
43. I don't feel that way any more. (I've changed my mind.)
44. I was scared.
45. That was a vacation! ("Having a wonderful time.")
46. A trip to the fair (church, theater, zoo).
47. A sports event I will never forget.
48. An obstacle I overcame (or must overcome).

49. The little red schoolhouse. (Sunday school or kindergarten as I remember it.)
50. Growing pains.
51. My life and hard times. (Hard times behind me.)
52. My experience in hospitals. (My operation.)
53. It shouldn't happen to a dog.
54. He who hesitates is lost.
55. My conscience is my guide.
56. Childhood ambitions.
57. A strong influence in my life.
58. I learn from experience.
59. My housing problem.
60. Houses I remember.
61. The best class period this semester.
62. I kept my New Year's resolution.
63. What I have learned in English (or history, etc.).
64. An important decision.
65. The world I left behind.
66. An unusual incident.
67. I was there.
68. A day I would like to forget.
69. Too far from home.
70. A tense moment.
71. I remember Mama.
72. Clouds in the sky.
73. I was a hero.
74. On the bum.
75. If I could do it over.
76. Too early in the morning.
77. How I learned to read.
78. Champion!
79. A boaster deflated.
80. The wrong key.
81. In one ear.
82. The twain met.
83. Over the bounding main.
84. Tinker, tinker, little car.
85. I knew it would happen.
86. A simple pleasure.
87. Some family treasure.
88. Someone's hands.
89. The way someone walks.
90. My first football game (or any game).
91. The total effect of a costume.
92. How a particular event in my life made me a different person.
93. I perished twice.

PERSONAL REACTIONS

1. It's easier to blame others.
2. A clear conscience is better (worse) than popularity.
3. Is pride a primitive trait?
4. What I would do if I knew I would lose my sight tomorrow.
5. Is maturity a relative thing?
6. The mental blindness of the human race.
7. What is more beautiful — the simple or the ornate?
8. The continuity of human experience.
9. The real me.
10. Worry.
11. How am I doing?
12. Why I dislike my name.
13. Why . . . is my favorite sport.
14. Why I like a small town.
15. Why I go to church.
16. Why I shall go to college.
17. Why . . . is my favorite picture.
18. Why I do (not) play cards.
19. Why I like poetry.
20. Why I like music.
21. Why I believe in immortality.
22. Why I do not believe in divorce.
23. Why I want to be a . . . .
24. Why I like to read novels.
25. Why I prefer jazz to classical music (or vice versa).
26. Why I don't like comic strips.
27. My idea of hard work.
28. My idea of a good dinner.
29. My idea of a good course.
30. My idea of a gentleman (or a lady).
31. My idea of a dull evening.

32. My idea of a perfect school.
33. How colors affect me.
34. How I feel in a dentist's chair.
35. How I feel when I have not prepared a lesson (or for an exam).
36. How I judge character.
37. How I read a newspaper.
38. How can I find time to study?
39. How new clothes affect me.
40. How I would invest one thousand dollars.
41. How I treat nosy people.
42. How much am I influenced by advertising?
43. What animal I should like to be for a day.
44. What I like in music or art.
45. What I don't like (or do like) about Illinois.
46. What I get out of music.
47. What religion means to me.
48. What's wrong with my home town.
49. What I think about science laboratories, student participation in extracurricular activities, air travel.
50. What I want from life.
51. What I think about athletics.
52. Where am I going?
53. What I like about the Midwest.
54. What I really enjoy doing.
55. If I were a (Jew, Protestant, Negro, Catholic, labor leader, capitalist, congressman, or newspaper editor).
56. If I had but three days to live.
57. If I were mayor of my home town.
58. If I were president.
59. My future as I see it.
60. My favorite pastime.
61. My favorite breed of dog.
62. My favorite hero in fiction.
63. My hobby and why I like it.
64. My book (play, movie) of the year.
65. My favorite subject.
66. The finest movie I have ever seen.
67. My favorite writer.
68. My peeves and I.
69. My philosophy.
70. My family is a problem.
71. My favorite season. (I like winter.)
72. My dream vacation.
73. My favorite musical composer and why I like him.
74. My record collection.
75. My ambition.
76. My favorite prejudice.
77. My favorite spectator sport.
78. My favorite movie star.
79. My favorite extracurricular activity.
80. My favorite magazine.
81. My worst enemy.
82. My favorite climate.
83. My alarm clock.
84. Being lonesome.
85. The most monotonous thing in the world.
86. Things I could get along without.
87. Effects of weather on my thoughts.
88. Names: advantages and disadvantages.
89. Music I enjoy.
90. A popular movie I didn't like.
91. Who's afraid?
92. Blue Monday mood.
93. What's the use?
94. Confused.
95. A worthwhile organization to which I belong.
96. The most important day.
97. It was music to my ears.
98. I like farm life.
99. The children of my relatives.
100. A character from fiction I should like to meet.
101. Three books I want to own and why.
102. May I suggest . . . .
103. Is farm work hard?
104. Radio programs I detest. (I hate soap operas.)
105. I scrub for my education.
106. A perfect job.
107. Examinations are a bother.

108. A record collection I should like.
109. Things that make me happy.
110. A legend of my town.
111. I discover . . . .
112. I prefer . . . .
113. The way I'd teach English.
114. I belong to a minority group.
115. A book I have read more than once.
116. "Oh, how I hate to get up in the morning." (Rise and shine.)
117. I like to study — but.
118. Homesick.
119. I am greedy for success.
120. Types of people that impress me.
121. The theme I've always wanted to write.
122. I am afraid of . . . .
123. When I can think best.
124. The pleasure of getting something new.
125. A miserable feeling.
126. My favorite food (foods).
127. The relation of religion to my life.
128. The way of all television.
129. I'm tired of monotony.
130. I'm tired.
131. Let the rest of the world go by.
132. Let's build a wall.
133. Games are silly.
134. Who wants to be a football star?
135. Let's abolish science.
136. Man's greatest invention.
137. Why man is superior to monkey.
138. Why read or write?
139. If ignorance is bliss . . . .
140. How to be happy though stupid.
141. The face in the mirror.
142. In a moment of optimism.

My World

143. What "bugs" me most.
144. What do you think are the enemies of mankind?
145. Should we go to the moon (or any other planet)?
146. What is your opinion of dissenters?
147. The importance of independence.
148. Poverty and happiness.
149. Are movies and TV stereotyping us today?
150. Is dictatorship ever justified?
151. A catalog of likes and dislikes.

Fill-ins

152. I would like to change . . . (and why).
153. If I could, I would like to . . . .
154. I dislike . . . .
155. I think . . . is wrong (or right).
156. If only . . . .
157. Happiness is . . . .
158. . . . and I just don't agree.
159. If I received a thousand dollars . . . .
160. I remember . . . .

PERSONAL REMINISCENCES AND REACTIONS

1. Adolescence — a preparation for love.
2. After a long interval (revisiting a scene that holds special meaning).
3. A belief I had when I was very young.
4. An action and my reaction.
5. The best team.
6. Dates — dating.

7. The day I received my driver's license.
8. An effective way to envision history is to read fiction.
9. A fear I overcame.
10. The generation gap.
11. I cut my hair.
12. I had to decide.
13. I saw it happen: why did it?
14. In the presence of my peers.
15. The joys of being a car owner.
16. The less brilliant moments in my life.
17. The moon — what next?
18. My biggest gripe.
19. My encounters with racial discrimination.
20. My experiences as a babysitter.
21. My first semester in high school.
22. My idea of a perfect day.
23. My opinion of poetry.
24. One of my favorite movies.
25. One of my favorite television shows.
26. On learning . . . .
27. An open letter to my parents.
28. A person to whom I am grateful.
29. The relevancy of school.
30. Rewards of nature.
31. Those were the good old days.
32. Three cars I would never own.
33. Three things worse than death.
34. A typical day in my life.
35. What I like best about summer.
36. What I have learned about people over . . . vacation.
37. What I dislike most about Christmas (or some other holiday).
38. What would have happened if . . . .
39. When I feel most independent.
40. Why I'd change a rule in my school.
41. Why I like rock music.
42. The world in which I live.
43. How the English program at . . . High School should be changed.
44. Black is beautiful.

FAMILIAR ESSAY

1. Pet peeves.
2. Life begins at 10 p.m.
3. An adventure in friendship.
4. The virtues of idleness.
5. Pages from my family history.
6. I'd like to write a book.
7. Being contented.
8. Bargain shopping.
9. Crushes and hero-worship.
10. The most valuable thing I have learned.
11. An important decision.
12. Local crudities (or curiosities).
13. Fire!
14. A curious dream.
15. While the jukebox blares.
16. The art of conversation.
17. I should have known.
18. On favorite colors.
19. Let me cry on your shoulder.
20. Lest we forget.
21. Plot for murder.
22. Worrying is good for you.
23. Going around in circles.
24. A contribution to better living.
25. Unnatural character in literature.
26. If an ancient Greek came to Chicago (or any other place).
27. Shoe personality.
28. New brooms raise a great dust.
29. Nurses are angels.
30. On a rainy day.
31. Pride before a fall.
32. The tribulations of a junior high school student.
33. Soap operas.
34. Why all the excitement?
35. . . . night on the radio.
36. Sidewalk hogs.
37. Tied to the apron strings.
38. Table manners.
39. Mental cruelty.
40. What a home ought to be.

41. Heart trouble at school.
42. Many brave hearts.
43. Library notes.
44. Radio commercials.
45. Why people have hobbies.
46. Borrowing and lending.
47. The life of a piggy bank.
48. The kinds of friends who wear well.
49. Local weather.
50. Maturity has its drawbacks.
51. On a shoestring.
52. A real champion.
53. Going, going, gone.
54. The blue ribbon.
55. The world in which I live.
56. Cats are a nuisance (blessing).
57. The advantages of being a hermit.
58. "Look for the silver lining."
59. Borrowing.
60. Today's slang.
61. The value of pessimism.
62. The values of sleep.
63. Choosing a hat.
64. Different ways of washing dishes.
65. Telling fortunes.
66. On a dog.
67. The art of being friendly.
68. If I had twenty-four hours to live.
69. What it means to be poor.
70. Saturday night.
71. Things are tough all over.
72. Twins.
73. Skeleton in the closet.
74. Cosmetics: theoretical and applied.
75. Reading for pleasure.
76. Quizzes.
77. What is tact?
78. Amateur dramatics.
79. Mother picks a school for Mortimer.
80. Brotherly love.
81. Fishing.
82. My idol.
83. What is a dog's life?
84. How intelligent is a horse?
85. Baby-tending, a harrowing job.
86. If anyone told the truth.
87. It's fun to observe people.
88. If we could read each other's minds.
89. They did it again.
90. Facing facts in daily life.
91. A good spectator.
92. Amusement crazy.
93. Horror movies.
94. The early worm passes more examinations.
95. A recipe for a satisfactory life.
96. Christmas (birthday) gifts are a necessary evil.
97. A tale told by . . . (some relative).
98. The last call.
99. Once upon a time.
100. Dangerous living.
101. Chivalry is still alive.
102. "The best laid schemes. . . ."
103. Books which have become movies.
104. Is it important to know one's weaknesses?
105. Clothes do not make the man.
106. Bad habits and how to enjoy them.
107. The picture of life one gets from movies.
108. Counting chickens before they are hatched.
109. Useful pets.
110. Good taste.
111. Liars should have good memories.
112. It's a wonderful life.
113. A fly in the ointment.
114. Mice.
115. The jolly company.
116. Green pastures.
117. Practical people.
118. Midnight.
119. Reputation.
120. The tables turned.
121. Old age.
122. Ghosts.
123. Things old and new.
124. The key.
125. A pipe and slippers.
126. Come and get it.
127. The unknown.
128. The circus comes to town.

129. Better late than never.
130. Radio jingles.
131. A pair of gloves.
132. Moustaches.
133. Life on the farm.
134. Life in the city.
135. On hearing an alarm clock.
136. My correspondence.
137. The value of pets.
138. Superstitious practices.
139. Who is my neighbor?
140. Misleading labels.
141. What is success in life?
142. What is sportsmanship?
143. My definition of tolerance.
144. What is humor?
145. What liberty means to me.
146. What is meant by maturity.
147. The meaning of dreams.
148. Benefits of crying.
149. Voices I could identify.
150. What makes an educated person today?
151. Qualities of friendship.
152. The educational value of mistakes.
153. American slang.
154. The value of patriotic symbols.
155. Words are cheap.
156. How I classify people.
157. The influence of cartoons.
158. News commentators.
159. Career women.
160. Does society owe me a job?
161. The hobby shop — a new business.
162. The urge to join.
163. A typical Northerner's view of the South.
164. Comic movies.
165. Women's Lib.

CHARACTER SKETCH (TYPES)

1. Day dreamer.
2. Juke box addict.
3. Taxi driver.
4. The practical joker.
5. The proud parent.
6. The "successful" man or woman.
7. Master of ceremonies.
8. The American woman.
9. Radio personality.
10. The drunkard.
11. The student.
12. Baby-sitter.
13. Preacher's son (or daughter).
14. Student waiter.
15. Camp counselor.
16. The movie detective.
17. Do-gooder.
18. The local policeman.
19. Teachers who bore me.
20. Little old lady.
21. A personal appearance.
22. Meet Joe Doe (the average American).

CHARACTER SKETCH (INDIVIDUALS)

1. A person I have almost forgotten.
2. My friend, . . . (someone of a different race or nationality).
3. A person I can't bear.
4. My favorite teacher (relative, commentator).
5. The most wonderful person I know.
6. A first-rate teacher.
7. My distinguished ancestor.
8. My best friend.
9. A person who has influenced my life.
10. What I learned from Dad. (In defense of Dad.) (My Dad.)
11. The most prominent citizen in my home town.
12. The most disreputable person I ever saw.
13. A person I will never forget.
14. A brief sketch of myself (any age, any mood).
15. Meet the Doc.

16. My most interesting friend.
17. The person I admire most.
18. Grandfather.
19. The man who never had a chance.
20. The most abused public servant.
21. A historical character.
22. An interesting public personality.
23. A character from fiction I should like to meet.
24. My favorite hero/heroine.
25. Brothers under the skin.
26. Eyes of blue.
27. From the other side of the tracks.

FANTASY

1. Fantasies of childhood.
2. From an atlas choose a list of towns with unusual names and improvise stories about their origins.
3. How I'd change . . . if I had written it.
4. The house of tomorrow.
5. I wish I had built . . . .
6. I wish I had known . . . .
7. I wish I had lived in the time of . . . .
8. If I were a . . . . (The student writes the paper as if he were an inanimate object, for instance—a purse, a shoe, a stove.)
9. I wish I had witnessed . . . .
10. A letter I would like to write (but never send).
11. My dream vacation.
12. My trip to the moon.
13. My medieval romance.

DESCRIPTION

1. The most beautiful spot I know.
2. A tropical sunset.
3. Spring in the country.
4. Scenic beauty nearby.
5. A storm. (A snow storm.)
6. Across the United States by rail.
7. A scene for a photographer.
8. January.
9. What my study table looks like.
10. The main street of my home town (describing stores, people, landmarks, etc.)
11. Classroom atmosphere.
12. Getting a meal in a crowded restaurant.
13. An old shop.
14. A plan for a recreation room.
15. The state (county) fair.
16. Interesting people or unusual customs in . . . .
17. Sounds at night.
18. In a strange land (real or imaginary).
19. With pen and brush.
20. Interior of a business house (shoe repair shop, barber shop, music store).
21. Setting of a novel or a play.
22. A lonesome road.
23. Colors in everyday life.
24. Snowfall.
25. An impressive sight.
26. Rural England (France, Belgium, etc.) as I saw it.
27. Winter in . . . .
28. A local building (interior or exterior).
29. Full moon.
30. School sounds.
31. The most horrible sight I ever saw.
32. A meal at a quick-lunch counter.
33. A typical railway station.
34. Home of a famous person.
35. My favorite haunt.
36. An efficient kitchen.
37. A favorite restaurant.

38. Saturday night in . . . .
39. Farm sale.
40. A great engineering (or other) project.
41. A street scene.
42. Strolling down Michigan Boulevard (Maxwell Street, Fifth Avenue, Wilshire Boulevard, Main Street).
43. The home town drugstore.
44. A trip on a 747.
45. Sunday dinner. (Family dinner.)
46. The auto of the future.
47. Our home.
48. A mysterious sound.
49. Bargain day.
50. The art of seeing things.
51. The well-dressed man or woman.
52. The most disreputable building I ever saw.
53. An interesting holiday in . . . .
54. Scene after victory.
55. Cheering section.
56. The look and feel of dusk.
57. Clouds.
58. Footsteps.
59. A train whistle.
60. Is there such a thing as silence?
61. Inventions I haven't yet perfected.
62. Write a letter in the role of a character from a book recently read.
63. Hunting a unicorn.
64. Inside Mrs. Murphy's purse.
65. The window.
66. The American of the seventies.
67. A college campus.
68. Customs in our school.
69. My room.
70. The ideal home, room.
71. Current costumes.
72. My mathematics class.
73. Seven o'clock Saturday night.
74. Dancers.
75. Description of a foreign city.
76. The . . . music festival.
77. The ideal Illinois farm.
78. Thanksgiving kitchen (or table).
79. An athlete's view of the opposing team.
80. Your garden in the fall (or any other season).
81. A drop of water.
82. A classroom bell.
83. An airplane overhead.
84. A bus going uphill.
85. An incident through the eyes of an inanimate object (Christmas wrapping, toy truck, doll, turkey drumstick).
86. How to bathe a dragon.
87. How to eat a grapefruit.
88. The king on the mountain.
89. Automobile horns.
90. Comparison of two photographers of the same subject.
91. A dance.
92. Description of Christmas card. (Treat as a game with card paperclipped to underside of theme. Read aloud in class — have members guess which card, then disclose.)
93. Faces.
94. A game.
95. Hypocrisy.
96. The inner city.
97. A list of choices, such as, wall, coat, leaf, pebble, door, ring, footprints, block, etc., to write impressions of.
98. My sense of smell — I would know it with my eyes closed.
99. Night on the streets of . . . .
100. This picture makes me think or feel like . . . .
101. Profiles in courage.
102. View from a window (various windows and neighborhoods).
103. What color is love?
104. What is a man?
105. Who is they?
106. The year 2000.
107. Today's heroes.
108. Description of a dream (nightmare) — real or fictional (try for a surrealistic effect).
109 Euphemism — "Telling It Like It Isn't."
110. Highways.
111. I love Chicago (any city).

112. Kinds of doors.
113. This music reflects . . . .
114. My car.
115. My favorite building.
116. My world would include . . . .
117. Pick pictures from *The Family of Man* (or other sources) and write descriptions using metaphors.
118. Sounds.
119. Walls and fences.
120. What does happiness taste like?
121. What is a woman?
122. Why is there never?
123. A typical airport.
124. TV Commercials.

PROCESSES

1. How to care for a cat (or any animal).
2. How to spend Sunday.
3. How to develop self-control.
4. How to find happiness.
5. How to keep your girl (boy) friend.
6. How to track a wild animal.
7. How to prepare my favorite dish.
8. How to cure a cold.
9. How to take good snapshots.
10. How to take notes.
11. How to criticize music.
12. How to make an ice cream soda.
13. How to keep friends.
14. How to spend a weekend.
15. How to show cattle.
16. How to loaf intelligently.
17. How to "apple polish."
18. How to plan a garden.
19. How to entertain the family.
20. How to dress a baby.
21. How to paper a room.
22. How to be popular.
23. How to grow tomatoes (or any vegetable, grain, or flower).
24. How to choose a friend.
25. How to solve the housing problem.
26. How to make cheese.
27. How to prepare ground for planting.
28. How to make coffee.
29. How a camera takes pictures.
30. How to write a good theme.
31. How to be nonchalant when embarrassed.
32. How to study systematically.
33. How seeds scatter.
34. How to prepare for an examination.
35. How to plan a meal.
36. How to avoid air tragedies.
37. How to cure insomnia.
38. How our club is financed.
39. How to get along with a brother (or sister).
40. How to enjoy music.
41. How a band moves into a formation.
42. How to give a gentle hint.
43. How to leave a party.
44. How to make an impression on a girl (or boy).
45. How to learn a part in a play.
46. How to administer artificial respiration.
47. How (not) to prepare for a journey.
48. How to caddy.
49. How to review a book.
50. How to develop film.
51. How to spend your time profitably while standing in line.
52. How to clean a rifle.
53. How to enjoy a vacation.
54. How to hunt with a camera.
55. How to sleep in class.
56. How to approach Dad.
57. How I would change present (traffic, food, education) laws.
58. Learning to ride a horse.
59. Do's and don'ts for basketball fans.
60. Tinkering with machinery.
61. Steps in making a garden.
62. A good party game.
63. In case of fire . . . .

64. Making something out of nothing.
65. Making social organizations successful.
66. Planning a small farm.
67. Safety gadgets for fliers.
68. How to steer a small plane.
69. Teaching a bird to talk.
70. A complicated play in basketball or football (use diagrams).
71. Helps for puzzle fiends.
72. How to "psych out" a teacher.
73. How to play a game.
74. How to spend an enjoyable evening in . . . .
75. Plan for a garden.
76. Where automobiles are likely to break down.
77. The serve in tennis.
78. Choosing a wardrobe.
79. Earning one's way.
80. The best scheme I ever heard of to make money.
81. Making a hobby profitable.
82. Miracles nature never thought of.
83. A good floor plan.
84. How books are classified in a library.
85. A chairman's (or speaker's) duties in a group discussion.
86. How to enjoy literature.
87. How to converse.

COMPARISON AND CONTRAST

1. San Francisco versus Los Angeles as a vacation spot (or two other cities).
2. Why a good workman may not be a good foreman.
3. Effective and ineffective radio (or television) advertising.
4. Comparisons of men and women drivers.
5. Formal education versus business experience.
6. Evils and virtues of competition.
7. North and South.
8. Studying in the library and in my room.
9. Large school versus small school.
10. My school and the ideal school.
11. My taste in books — then and now.
12. British and American movies.
13. Living on the farm, in the city, in the small town.
14. Radio (or television) advertising then and now.
15. Television versus Hollywood.
16. Two Christmases.
17. The West or South in fiction and in fact.
18. Home was never like this.
19. The Model-T and the Ford of today.
20. Today's student problems.
21. The arts — present and past.
22. The difference between friendship and love.
23. Plane versus train travel.
24. A small town in Illinois compared with one in . . . .
25. A contrast between living and existing.
26. Flag waving versus patriotism.
27. Then and now: entertainment, war, dress, courting, farming, education.
28. Tschaikovsky and the rock groups.
29. Compare: book and movie.
30. Republican and Democrat.
31. Before and after.
32. What I am compared with what I want to be.
33. Farm machinery today and yesterday.
34. English rugby versus American football.
35. Two books (stories, poems) by the same author.
36. My mother (father) disagrees with me.

37. My tastes in movies have changed.
38. Television versus radio as entertainment.
39. I was younger then.
40. Hollywood at its best and worst.
41. Stage play versus movie.
42. How World War III would differ from World War II.
43. Why the Yankees seldom lose.
44. I'd rather have a dog.
45. A dog's life—and mine.
46. Dairy cattle and beef cattle.

PERSUASIVE EXPOSITION

1. Don't fail to tune in on . . . tonight.
2. The only way to travel.
3. Borrowing as a good policy.
4. Let there be music.
5. The horse must come before the cart.
6. All food prices off.
7. Gambling on sports isn't funny.
8. Everyone needs some kind of religion.
9. Generals rule the world.
10. Roadside advertising.
11. "Honor thy father and thy mother."
12. The need for precision.
13. Race prejudice must go.
14. The case for relaxation.
15. Be a nonconformist.
16. Don't count too much on first impressions.
17. Smaller homes.
18. What should the Negro's attitude in politics be?
19. Raise teachers' pay.
20. Tariffs must be boosted to protect the American farmer.
21. Decorations must be functional.
22. Foreign customs we should borrow.
23. How I would change present traffic laws.
24. The best sport to watch.
25. Decline of courtesy.
26. The best state in the Union.
27. There ought to be a law.
28. Live and let live.
29. We should have the honor system.
30. American youth need education in happy family living.
31. Radio ranting.
32. Suggestions for the improvement of English courses.
33. We need a course in . . . .
34. What a home ought to be.
35. Let's have better movies.
36. One argument against war.
37. Reforms needed in the field of education.
38. Outlining is practical.
39. Compulsory education to the age of eighteen.
40. The ideal plan to give Americans the best possible medical care.
41. Give me a small school.
42. Youth is the time for experiment.
43. Do athletics injure the body?
44. Why we can be proud of our school.
45. Let us choose our own friends (courses, etc.).
46. Do athletics build character?
47. Comics serve a purpose.

ARGUMENTATIVE EXPOSITION

1. Should income taxes be reduced?
2. Should the United States take the lead in world disarmament?
3. Should eighteen-year-olds be allowed to vote?
4. Should Congress pass anti-lynch legislation?

5. Work your way through college?
6. Can a socialist state remain democratic?
7. The right to strike.
8. Why learn foreign languages?
9. Do engineers need liberal arts courses?
10. English courses should not be required of all students.
11. Who said progress?
12. It's a mistake to subsidize athletes.
13. Advertising pays, or does it?
14. Is our grading system fair?
15. Simplified spelling.
16. Is football being commercialized?
17. The advantages (or disadvantages) of having too many friends.
18. Should the presidency of the United States be limited to one six-year term?
19. Are depressions inevitable?
20. Should teachers organize?
21. Scientists: on tap or on top?
22. Advantages of good business ethics.
23. Consolidation of rural schools.
24. Scientific advances justify wars.
25. Presidents should be elected by popular vote.
26. Is Armistice Day now a mockery?
27. Are too many people going to college?
28. What this country needs is a good third party.
29. Drugs — bane or blessing?
30. Intelligence tests — so-called.
31. Exams — good or bad idea?
32. Why get married?
33. Television is too commercialized.
34. What our school needs most.
35. Should grades be abolished?
36. American advertising — a study in change of American values.
37. Care of the elderly.
38. Causes of juvenile delinquency.
39. Wire-tapping.
40. Chemical warfare.
41. Compulsory military training.
42. Cook County versus Downstate.
43. Defense contracts.
44. The danger of conglomerates.
45. Environmental crises.
46. The failures of our present educational system.
47. Foreign aid policy.
48. The future of the railroads.
49. The futility of war.
50. Give the young a change!
51. Health care.
52. How youth can bring about social change.
53. In defense of marriage and the family.
54. . . . is better than the Republican party.
55. Compulsory military training for girls.
56. Destroy the atomic bomb formula.
57. Do we spend our time wisely?
58. Merits of the younger (older) generation.
59. Abolish the electoral college.
60. Black separatism (for or against).
61. The case against (or for) student demonstrations.
62. Censorship.
63. The Chinese puzzle.
64. Concentration on technological and scientific progress and neglect of moral and spiritual values will ruin America.
65. Drugs.
66. The ethics of labor unions.
67. Farm subsidies.
68. The forgotten group in American education.
69. The future of the UN.
70. Gambling in professional sports.
71. Gun control.
72. How much land does a man need?
73. Humanity, in history, has always crucified its pioneers.
74. Is our grading system fair?
75. In defense of our two-party system.
76. Legalized gambling.

77. Man and ecology.
78. The military-industrial complex.
79. Movies insult the mind.
80. Pay television.
81. Police brutality.
82. Population — 100 per square foot of earth.
83. The problem of migrant workers.
84. Reforms in our penal system.
85. Riot control.
86. Security is man's chief enemy.
87. The student's role in modern life.
88. The urban crisis.
89. Ways to achieve integration.
90. What kind of defense system?
91. What to do about inflation?
92. Will we ever have a universal language?
93. Why do students drop out?
94. Why the Democratic (or Republican) party?
95. Let us choose our own courses.
96. The Middle East.
97. Modern man's dependence on machines.
98. Our space program.
99. The place of the church in today's society.
100. Poverty breeds crime.
101. Public aid to private schools.
102. The right to strike.
103. ROTC.
104. Sex education.
105. Teen-agers are (or are not) sensation seekers.
106. Volunteer army.
107. Vote for ....
108. What I can do about intolerance.
109. What is worth writing?
110. Why men outnumber women as humorists.
111. Women are not equal.
112. Government subsidy of railroads.

SPORTS

1. Basketball as a spectator sport.
2. Fickleness of sports fans.
3. An outstanding sports event.
4. Are athletics physical education?
5. The nation's top basketball team.
6. Crowding the hero-bench.
7. Winter sports.
8. Women in sports.
9. Sports propaganda.
10. Athletics at our school.
11. America's greatest athlete.
12. Is winning necessary?
13. Life is like a game of baseball.
14. What is sportsmanship?
15. Recent changes in basketball (or other) rules and tactics.
16. An exciting moment in a game.
17. The Greek Olympics.

THE NEWS — NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL

1. Inflation.
2. Treatment of minority groups in the United States.
3. The peacetime army.
4. The age of lawlessness.
5. Traffic accidents.
6. The importance of credit in the business world.
7. Congress in the saddle.
8. Youthful vandalism in America.
9. The FBI — its aims and accomplishments.
10. Do we need birth control?
11. Viet Nam.
12. Nuclear weapons as a force for world peace.
13. Freedom of the press.
14. Value of expeditions.
15. Causes of Russia's suspicion of us (or vice versa).
16. Man of the year.
17. What to do about immigration.
18. Most interesting news story of the year.

19. Foreign influences in American life.
20. Democracy begins at home.
21. Our Good-Neighbor policy.
22. The future of labor.
23. U.S. political figures.
24. The housing problem.
25. Airline hijacking.
26. Racial (religious, social) prejudice in America.
27. Why are prices still high?
28. Do we need antilabor legislation?
29. Filthy restaurants — a national plague.
30. What we should do with nuclear weapons.
31. The United States' attitude toward other countries' problems.
32. Labor legislation now pending in Congress.
33. The foreign policy of the United States.
34. The trend toward military leadership.
35. What's wrong with our occupation policy in foreign countries?
36. Best news of the year.
37. What will Russia do next?
38. Will India become Communist?
39. Improving relations with other countries.
40. The traffic fatality record.
41. A federation of European states.
42. What is news?
43. Korea: nation of tragedy.
44. The Middle East: lid on a volcano.
45. An evaluation of a newspaper.

SCIENCE

1. Possibilities in plastics.
2. How atomic energy can be utilized for industrial purposes.
3. Advantages of frequency modulation.
4. Jet propulsion.
5. A modern invention.
6. Travel in the next decade.
7. A recent development in medicine.
8. Vitamins.
9. Plastic surgery.
10. Radar for commercial airlines.
11. Why your radio gives you trouble.
12. House of tomorrow.
13. A great engineering project.
14. DDT builds superinsects.
15. Opportunities for a career in science.
16. Fabrics of the future.
17. Future of the automobile telephone.
18. How long can a car last?
19. The most interesting chemistry.
20. The place of science in modern life.
21. The useful soya bean.
22. Travel in the next decade.
23. The chemistry of warfare.
24. Radio of the future.
25. A recent important scientific development.
26. A useful gadget.
27. The latest development in airplanes (or radar, highways, automobiles, etc.).
28. Lost in a test tube.
29. Will everybody fly?
30. Pollution.

THE ARTS AND ENTERTAINMENT

1. The place of the arts today.
2. Interior decoration (color schemes, period furniture, etc.).
3. The illusion in the phrase "modern civilization."
4. Schools of modern art.
5. "Reading maketh the full man."

6. Profitable popular magazines.
7. The explanation for singers.
8. The best emcee on TV.
9. Types of American architecture.
10. Movie villains — new style.
11. Movies and morals.
12. The best entertainment of the year.
13. If television lived up to its possibilities.
14. Are literary standards being lowered?
15. American TV programs.
16. A few things everyone should know about art.
17. Amusement via the TV.
18. Printing may become a minor art.
19. The news magazine.
20. The future of dress design.
21. Three types of villains.
22. The ingredients of a good mystery, story, movie, play, book, or TV program.
23. The value of the little theater group.
24. Opportunities for a career in the arts.

FARMING

1. The value of 4-H clubs.
2. Crop rotation.
3. Farms: the life of the nation.
4. The development of hybrid corn.
5. Contour plowing.
6. Development of hybrids.
7. What is a farmer's cooperative association?
8. A problem (project) of the modern farmer.
9. Scientific farming.
10. Social life in rural communities.
11. Crops of the future.
12. Contour farming.
13. Dairy farming.
14. Kinds of erosion and their causes.
15. The farmer: yesterday and today.

RELIGION

1. The place of religion in the world today.
2. Religion and life.
3. The basic teachings of my church.
4. Religion in school.
5. Does religion make sense?
6. A modern code for living.
7. The real values of going to church.
8. Qualities of a good sermon.
9. Life of a minister (priest, nun).

PHILOSOPHY

1. Appearance and reality.
2. Be yourself.
3. Character and personality.
4. Environmental influences which mold a character.
5. Generalization: my weakness.
6. Here I am, learn me.
7. Idealism versus materialism.
8. Immortality.
9. Language and philosophy.
10. Man and superman.
11. The most important thing in life to me (values).
12. My philosophy of life.
13. On being an atheist.
14. On being a Jew.
15. On being an existentialist.
16. On being a rationalist.

17. On being a transcendentalist.
18. On life.
19. Relative morality.
20. Beauty.
21. Believe your thoughts.
22. Conflict and harmony.
23. Discipline and freedom.
24. Hellenism and Hebraism.
25. How free is freedom?
26. I dig Socrates (or some other philosopher).
27. Inward voyages.
28. Life is a dream.
29. Me.
30. My idea of the good life.
31. On being an agnostic.
32. On being a Christian.
33. On being an eclectic.
34. On being a mystic.
35. On being a revolutionary.
36. On death.
37. Philosophy of life or an examination of values in current jargon like "What Is Your Thing?"
38. Self-analysis — the shaping of my model, or who (what) cut my pattern?
39. Sincerity and art.
40. Truth.
41. What do I believe?
42. What pride means to me.
43. What is taste?
44. What's it all about? (Life.)
45. This I believe about modern teens.
46. This I believe.
47. Vanity and proper price.
48. What I must do is all that concerns me, not what people think.
49. What is culture?
50. What is true courage?
51. Why I put on an act.

THE SCHOOL

1. The student's role in modern life.
2. Social prestige in school.
3. What makes a course popular with students?
4. The place of science in education.
5. Interracial relations in our school.
6. Some reasons students fail examinations.
7. I'd prefer the little red school.
8. The forgotten two-thirds in American education.
9. Sex education should be compulsory.
10. Some advantages of a teacher's life.
11. Extracurricular activities.
12. A deficiency in American education.
13. Can a smart student flunk?
14. Classroom morals.
15. Who deserves an education?
16. Red tape.
17. Where students are likely to break down.
18. The essential requirements of a good teacher.
19. Students are smarter than teachers believe.
20. Vacations are too short (or too long).
21. Schools try to do too much.
22. A fad in our school.
23. The three R's — plus Reasoning.

LITERARY TOPICS

1. The aspect of guilt in Wouk's *Caine Mutiny Court Martial.*
2. *Brave New World* — the ideal society — paradise or nightmare?

3. Browning's treatment of love in "By the Fireside," and "Two in the Campagna."
4. *Crime and Punishment:* a guide for modern revolutionaries.
5. Ethan Frome's solution.
6. The faults of knight-erranty (from *Once and Future King*).
7. Hester Prynne repentant?
8. Huck Finn — clever, lucky, foolish, or naive?
9. Huckleberry Finn versus modern delinquents.
10. Huxley's use of paradox.
11. The importance of the minor characters in *Return of the Native.*
12. Irony in *Face of a Hero.*
13. Ishmael versus Ahab.
14. Jane Eyre, parallel to Charlotte Bronte's life.
15. Macbeth, Banquo, MacDuff: an ideal Elizabethan.
16. Martin Luther King's speech: "I Have a Dream," as example of the use of extended metaphor.
17. *Moby Dick* as a symbolic voyage.
18. The multiple functions of the four tempters in *Murder in the Cathedral.*
19. My definition of tragedy and how Macbeth fits it.
20. The natural man versus the civilized man in *Joseph Andrews.*
21. Nature and effects of sin in *The Scarlet Letter.*
22. Oedipus, a victim of circumstance.
23. Of love, life, death from *The Bridge of San Luis Rey.*
24. Opinion of one philosophical idea in Pope's "Essay on Man."
25. The problem of identity in *The Prince and the Pauper.*
26. The relevancy of Hamlet's view of war.
27. The relevancy of social commentary in *Grapes of Wrath.*
28. The relevancy of social commentary in *Native Son.*
29. Romeo, in love with love.
30. Significance of Santiago's words, "A man can be destroyed but not defeated" (from *The Old Man and the Sea*).
31. The structural value of the hymn, "The Tie That Binds" in *The Bridge of San Luis Rey.*
32. Symbolism in *The Miracle Worker.*
33. Theme of birth and social rank in Jane Austen's novels.

Comparison and Contrast

1. Beowulf compared or contrasted with other heroes.
2. Comparison of the attitudes toward war in *A Separate Peace* and *Steppenwolf.*
3. Comparisons and contrasts in *Beowulf* and the *Canterbury Tales.*
4. Comparison of concept of loveliness in *Ethan Frome* and *Red Badge of Courage.*
5. Comparison of democratic ideas in *Walden* and "Civil Disobedience."
6. Comparison of *Hamlet* and *Rosencrantz & Guildenstern Are Dead.*
7. Comparison of Hamlet's problems to youth's problems today.
8. Comparison of Keats' "The Eve of St. Agnes," *Romeo and Juliet,* and *West Side Story.*
9. Comparison of "The Lady of Shalott" with Lancelot and Elaine.
10. Comparison of King Arthur, Macbeth, Sir Thomas More, and Gulliver.

11. Comparison of the problem of evil in *Wuthering Heights* and some recent novel.
12. Comparison of Romeo and Juliet's problems to the problems of teenagers today.
13. Comparison of Shakespeare's Hamlet to T. S. Eliot's quote, "Between the idea and the reality/Between the motion and the act/Falls the Shadow."
14. Comparison and/or contrast of Shakespeare's *Romeo and Juliet* and *West Side Story* or *Romeo and Juliet* and *Romanoff and Juliet.*
15. A comparison of spring in Chaucer's *Canterbury Tales* and Eliot's *The Waste Land.*
16. A comparison of *Tale of Two Cities* to the events and characters in the French revolution.
17. Contemporary values manifested in *Waiting for Godot* and *Endgame.*
18. Contrast in concept of success in Franklin's *Autobiography* and Miller's *All My Sons.*
19. Is *Antony and Cleopatra* a matured *Romeo and Juliet* theme?
20. A discussion of death in *Death Be Not Proud* by Donne, "Birches" by Frost, and "The Junk Man" by Sandburg.
21. *For Whom the Bell Tolls* and *A Farewell to Arms*: A study of world politics through imagery.
22. Lack of communication in "The Sounds of Silence" and Ferlinghetti.
23. Man's alienation in a twentieth century environment as envisioned in *The Stranger* and answer to man's alienation in *The Grapes of Wrath.*
24. Parallels in *The Scarlet Letter* and *The Crucible.*
25. Parallels in technique in the first book of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Animal Farm.*
26. Parallels in view of man in the last book of *Gulliver's Travels* and *Lord of the Flies* or *The Mysterious Stranger.*
27. Profiles in courage: Maria of *West Side Story* and/or Juliet of *Romeo and Juliet.*
28. Satire as presented in Chaucer and Swift.
29. Simon and Garfunkel's "Patterns" compared to Amy Lowell's "Patterns."
30. Social conditions in *Oliver Twist* and *Hard Times* applied to present American society.
31. To become an adult (based variously upon "Flight," Steinbeck; *Our Town,* Wilder; "The Bear," Faulkner).
32. Comparison of fourth voyage of *Gulliver's Travels* to *Planet of the Apes.*
33. Comparison and/or contrast of *Utopia* with *1984,* or *Brave New World, Lost Horizon.*

"Creative" Writing Paralleling Literary Works

1. Examples of "plastic living" in my life (from *Travels with Charley*).
2. Huck Finn at my high school.
3. The Huck Finn in me.
4. Imitation of an author's style.
5. Mock epic (in which students attempt to include all epic conventions).
6. "My circles in hell" evolving from a study of Dante's *Inferno.*
7. My inaugural address (after studying various inaugural addresses).

8. My modest proposal (written in conjunction with Chaucer's Prologue).
9. Introducing the house of (surname), following study of Poe's "Fall of the House of Usher."
10. My pattern: based on "Patterns" and "The Sculptor's Funeral."
11. My prologue (written in conjunction with Chaucer's prologue).
12. Name: An epitaph (after the fashion of Masters' *Spoon River Anthology*).
13. An original parable (after studying biblical parables).
14. An original psalm (after studying biblical psalms).
15. Parodies of such works as "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" or of modern songs and poetry.
16. Richard Cory's suicide note.
17. A Silas Marner of the 1970s.

PART II OF A THOUSAND TOPICS

This *Bulletin* is Part I of the revision of "A Thousand Topics for Composition." Part II, prepared especially for the elementary level, by Professor Walter J. Moore, College of Education, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, will comprise the February issue of the *Illinois English Bulletin*. In addition to lists of topics for composition, many of which may be used by secondary school students as well as elementary, many motivational techniques are included. Both the January and February *Bulletins* should be of great interest to both teachers and students who many times have had to grope for appropriate topics.